

Condition of Prisoners In Cuba Reported Better

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NEW YORK, Mar. 19 (AP).

James B. Donovan, New York lawyer negotiating for the release of more than 20 Americans in Cuban jails, disclosed today that he used \$170 of his own money to set up prison accounts for 17 on the Isle of Pines.

Mr. Donovan said the condition of the Americans remaining in Cuban prisons "has been materially improved since the release of the Bay of Pigs prisoners and our delivery of drugs and food to Cuba."

"But, it remains true," he said, "that no imprisonment in a tropical prison is a pleasant ordeal."

The first two of the Americans expected to be released as a result of the current negotiations arrived in Miami Sunday. Both were women. One had spent more than two years in a jail.

Mr. Donovan has declined to give any details of the basis for their release, but said it was entirely different from the ransom of the 1,113 invasion prisoners, which he negotiated.

He said the prisoners were in four different jails. They ranged in age from 18 to 67

and came from all walks of life, he said.

"I found out I could set up little accounts for them with the prison authorities," he said. "They could buy cigarettes, coffee and toilet paper in a packet for about 10 cents."

"Fortunately, I brought some money with me, perhaps to buy a present for my wife, and I was able to set up an account of \$10 for each of the 17 on the Isle of Pines."

"That \$10 will go a long way. They're almost millionaires now, as prison standards go."

Asked if he expected to get his \$170 back, he said, "I couldn't care less."

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